

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 01917 031922Z

61

ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE BRUSSELS BEL

COMUSFORAZ LAJES FIELD AZORES

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MAAR, PO, US

SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER COMMENTS ON AZORES

1. PORTUGUESE PRESS AND RADIO APRIL 3 CARRY TEXT OF INTER-
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PAGE 02 LISBON 01917 031922Z

VIEW GIVEN BY PORTUGUESE PRIME MINISTER VASCO GONCALVES

STATING THAT LAJES AFB WOULD NOT BE UTILIZED AGAINST ARAB COUNTRIES.

2. DATELINED BEIRUT, APRIL 3, AP-ANI STORY IS AS FOLLOWS:
BEING TEXT

THE PRIME MINISTER OF PORTUGAL, BRIGADIER VASCO GONCALVES, STATED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WILL NOT PERMIT THE AMERICAN BASE IN THE AZORES TO BE UTILIZED AGAINST THE ARAB COUNTRIES. WE RECALL THAT UNDER THE REGIME OF THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER, MARCELO CAETANO, THAT BASE SERVED FOR REFUELING STOPS OF AMERICAN MILITARY TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT DURING THE EMERGENCY ARMS SHIPMENT TO ISRAEL IN THE CLOSING DAYS OF THE MIDDLE EAST WAR IN 1973. QUESTIONED BY THE LEBANESE MAGAZINE AL-MASSA OF BEIRUT, REGARDING THE FUTURE POLICY OF HIS GOVERNMENT ON THE SUBJECT, VASCO GONCALVES STATED: "WE WILL NEVER ADOPT A HOSTILE ATTITUDE AGAINST THE ARAB PEOPLE AND WE WILL NEVER CONSENT TO SUCH AN ATTITUDE BEING ADOPTED FROM OR THROUGH OUR TERRITORY."

THE PORTUGUESE PRIME MINISTER FURTHER DECLARED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO ESTABLISHED "THE STRONGEST AND MOST SINCERE RELATIONS" WITH THE ARAB WORLD. "WE WANT" HE EMPHASIZED, "THE CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST TO BE RESOLVED PEACEFULLY SO THAT THE LEGITIMATE INTEREST OF THE PEOPLES OF THE REGION ARE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION, PARTICULARLY THOSE OF THE PALESTINIANS." THE MAGAZINE ALSO QUOTES THE PORTUGUESE PRIME MINISTER AS HAVING STATED THAT PORTUGAL WOULD CONTINUE TO BE A MEMBER OF NATO, UNLESS A NEW PARLIAMENT SHOULD VOTE TO THE CONTRARY,

"WE HAVE COMMITTED OURSELVES TO RESPECTING PORTUGAL'S TREATY OBLIGATIONS. THEREFORE WE WILL CONTINUE AS MEMBERS OF NATO," VASCO GONCALVES REPORTED SAID. "BUT THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT ANYTHING CAN BE IMPOSED ON THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE. THE PEOPLE WILL HAVE TO MAKE THEIR DECISIONS THROUGH A PARLIAMENT WHICH WILL BE ELECTED SOON. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE PEOPLE MAKE THIS DECISION BECAUSE IT WILL BE THEIR FREE CHOICE WHICH WILL BE DEFENDED IF THEIR WILL SHOULD BE CHALLENGED."

THE LEBANESE MAGAZINE INTERPRETED THIS STATEMENT AS
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PAGE 03 LISBON 01917 031922Z

EVIDENCE THAT THE POLITICAL PARTIES WHICH SUPPORT THE LISBON GOVERNMENT WOULD MAKE THE PRESENCE OF NATO AND OF MILITARY BASES IN THE AZORES ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL ISSUES OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. ARAB COUNTRIES INCLUDED PORTUGAL IN THE OIL EMBARGO WHICH THEY IMPOSED ON THE UNITED STATES DURING THE MIDDLE EAST WAR OF 1973. THE EMBARGO AGAINST PORTUGAL WAS ONLY LIFTED AFTER THE FALL OF THE CAETANO REGIME LAST YEAR, AND THE SUBSEQUENT POLICY OF DECOLONIZATION FOLLOWED BY THE LISBON GOVERN-

MENT. SINCE THEN THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT HAS SENT VARIOUS
MINISTERIAL DELEGATIONS TO THE ARAB OIL PRODUCING COUNTRIES IN
AN ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH STABLE ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB
WORLD.

"NOW THAT PORTUGUESE COLONIALISM IN AFRICA HAS BEEN
LIQUIDATED," DECLARED BRIGADIER VASCO GONCALVES TO AL-MASSA,
"I BELIEVE THAT THE DOORS ARE OPEN FOR ESTABLISHING CLOSE
ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN
PORTUGAL AND THE ARAB STATES." END TEXT.
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